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ABSTRACT

Frequently, educational institutions seeking to implement Total Quality Management (TQM) as a means to improve institutional effectiveness, overemphasize training in the application of TQM tools and fail to fully address human needs and concerns, such as the critical issue of employee empowerment. Four principal barriers exist to adequately addressing the personnel side of TQM: (1) time; (2) aversion to change; (3) middle management; and (4) attitudes. For TQM to be effective, adequate time must be provided to train people properly, reach appropriate decisions, implement a new way of thinking, and change the institutional culture. In addition, middle managers must be encouraged to change from people who control, demand, and solve problems independently, to those who empower, coach, and facilitate problem solving. Finally, an important part of implementing TQM is inspiring employees with a shared vision of the future and reducing individual fears to create an organizational climate of teamwork and innovation. At Rio Salado College (RSC) in Phoenix, Arizona, the TQM program emphasized the development of a shared and believable vision among employees at all levels. Through collective brainstorming, RSC developed a vision statement of how the college would appear in the year 2000. An employee survey was used to identify employees' principal fears and helped open the doors of communication for dealing effectively with those fears. Other features of the TQM program at RSC include an employee training program, an Employee Empowerment Training Manual, a weekly President's bulletin, a monthly President's breakfast with a small group of employees randomly selected across all levels, and a Rewards and Recognition Program. (PAA)

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The Human Side of Quality: Employee Care and Empowerment

Linda M. Thor, Ed.D.
President
Rio Salado Community College

Paper presented at the League for Innovation in the Community College's Conference "Community Colleges and Corporations: Partners in Total Quality Management" (Irvine, CA, February 1, 1993).

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**"Community Colleges and Corporations:
Partners In Total Quality Management"**

**League For Innovation
February 1, 1993 - Irvine, California**

THE HUMAN SIDE OF QUALITY: EMPLOYEE CARE AND EMPOWERMENT

**Linda M. Thor, Ed.D.
President
Rio Salado Community College**

In 1961, John Kennedy told us that "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education.... The human mind is our fundamental resource."

I believe he was correct. Because you are involved in education in some way throughout our country, you believe that he was correct as well. Over the 3 decades that have passed since President Kennedy made that statement, we've seen a lot of change in education, especially in higher education. We've seen more community involvement, more community awareness, and more outreach by institutions of higher learning.

We've become aware of the absolute need for a dynamic and responsive educational system in order to keep up with the changing needs of the workplace and to meet the demands of a global marketplace.

So when I was asked to speak about Total Quality Management in our community college setting, I was very pleased. And when I was asked to choose some topic area from within the entire TQM field, I recalled the words of John Kennedy and I chose to address the human side of quality - more specifically, employee empowerment. I chose this area because too often I have seen organizations that are trying to implement TQM by focusing training on TQM tools and failing to fully address human concerns and needs.

Two thousand years ago,the Greek Philosopher Epictetus said that "Only the educated are free." Two hundred years ago, Novelist Andre Gide said that "Education is freedom." One hundred and fifty years ago, Henry Peter, Lord Brougham said, "Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave."

And just last year, Linda Thor said, "If you're not living and working in TQM, then you have no business teaching TQM."

All of these quotes say the same thing. Take time to educate your own people first. Pay attention to the human side of your organization. Unless you empower your employees, they will not be "free" to make their part of your organization the best it can be and they will not be free to be as creative as they can be. Unless you take care of the human side of quality, you will never realize the true benefits of a TQM organization.

But as you focus your attention on the human side, expect to encounter some common, but significant barriers. And believe me, these are not just barriers which were arrived at during some philosophical discussion. We have experienced every one of them and I will attempt to outline how we are overcoming each of them during the remainder of this presentation.

The four barriers are:

*Time
*Aversion to change
*Middle management
*Attitudes

The first and often most troubling barrier is that TQM takes TIME.

- Time required to train people properly.
- Time required to reach appropriate decisions.
- Time required to implement a new way of thinking.
- Time required to change an institutional culture.

TQM doesn't happen quickly. You must train your people FIRST and that takes time. Everyone wants to get TQM started TODAY - maybe because there's a market for it, or because it's popular, or because your boss or board tells you you should. But if you don't take the time, you will exponentially increase your chances at failure.

The second barrier is easily seen with all "NEW" things - an AVERSION TO CHANGE.

To be successful, you have to try to understand, and help your employees understand, the nature of change and why people resist it.

At Rio we have found it helpful to visualize change as a "J". As you begin the "J" at its shorter side, you first react to a change as "Oh." As you reach the bottom, the change becomes "Oh no." Pulling out, the change becomes "OK" until you reach the top "Oh, yes!"

You have to help your employees understand that change is a process, not an event. To get your organization to change, the individuals in that organization have to

change - one by one by one. Change is highly personal. Each individual sees the change differently. Each individual looks at change as to how it affects him or her and how it affects each job.

People go through phases or stages when they are attempting to adopt to change, as documented in the Concerns Based Adoption Model.

1. They start with AWARENESS - "I don't know anything about this."

2. Then they move to the INFORMATION stage - "I've heard a little about this and I am actively seeking more information.

3. Then it becomes PERSONAL - "How will this affect MY life?"

4. Then it moves into their MANAGEMENT approach - "I'm having trouble managing time or whatever."

5. They start to think about CONSEQUENCES - "How is this affecting my customers?"

6. They start to see the advantages and begin COLLABORATION - "I want to work with others who are already using this."

7. And finally they begin the process of REFOCUSING - "I can think of some modifications to make this work even better."

But there are pitfalls that you will experience and you need to be cautious about expecting too much too quickly from a change in the organizational culture.

First, NOT EVERYONE IN AN ORGANIZATION WILL CHANGE, NO MATTER WHAT!

Second, VERY FEW FOLKS WILL EVER REACH THE REFOCUSING STAGE.

Third, PEOPLE TEND TO BACKSLIDE WHEN THE ATTENTION OF THE LEADERS DRIFTS AWAY.

Fourth, IT'S PERFECTLY OKAY FOR PEOPLE TO BE AT ANY STAGE.

And lastly, IT'S OKAY TO MOVE THROUGH STAGES AT DIFFERENT RATES AND AT DIFFERENT TIMES.

The third barrier to change is actually an integral part of any administration - and that is MIDDLE MANAGEMENT.

Middle managers are often fearful of TQM because they fear loss of what little power they think they have or worse, loss of their jobs as the organization is flattened. There was a Dilbert cartoon that expressed some of the fears felt by middle managers.

> "I've decided to use humor in the workplace." "Experts say that humor eases tension which is important in times when the workforce is being trimmed." "Knock-Knock." "Who's there?" "Not you anymore."

Now that IS a funny cartoon. But those insecurities experienced by Middle Managers often act as serious barriers to TQM implementation.

But these concerns can be addressed. Paula Martin said recently in an article in Training Magazine, middle managers aren't necessarily more adverse to change than anyone else in the organization.

They are, however, confused about their new role in this whole quality ballgame and they are frustrated because they can't empower others when they have no real power to give. It is vitally important, she said, that we redefine the role of middle managers as coaches and leaders and team players so that they can be a part of the process and that we empower them so they have some power to give to others.

And we must help them change their behavior from one who controls, demands, independently problem solves and discourages risk-taking to one who empowers, coaches, facilitates problem-solving and encourages risk-taking.

But to do this, they have to be given the power to change whatever inhibits the organization or area from satisfying customers and they must be held accountable for that satisfaction.

As Robert Waterman said:

> "To get results, you loosen the reins. The first time you try it, it will scare hell out of you."

The fourth barrier is that to make TQM viable, you have to get below the surface - you have to change underlying ATTITUDES.

Sometimes employees approach change with a mindset to avoid change altogether by just ignoring it as depicted in this cartoon.

> "In my proposed management reorganization plan, we shuffle our desks around like this - REALLY FAST - announce we've made a 50% staff reduction, and hope nobody notices."

Well, I'm here to tell you that people do notice. But even then it doesn't seem to matter to some folks. They still try to stonewall the process. Here's what you can expect to hear about TQM:

> It's not my job.
>
> If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
>
> It will never work here.
>
> What we do can't be measured.
>
> I don't have time for those training classes.
>
> This is a bunch of leftover '60s bull.
>
> You've got to keep a handle on people or things will really go downhill around here.
>
> That won't work in my department. We're different.

Although the source of this chart is not known to me, I believe that this description of the Anatomy of Innovation is an appropriate one for those of you trying to bring TQM into your organization. The chart covers a two year period in which the attitudes move from skeptical to enthusiasm to brass bands and fireworks. You then start downhill with this is taking time, results aren't visible, existing business is suffering, is it worth it--and you are now in The Dark Night Of The Innovator. Coming out of it you start to see pay-offs, maybe this is not a bad idea to finally, it works!

As this chart states, "The way innovation is handled is critical in retaining enthusiasm and commitment and in overcoming the inevitable problems that arise."

Now before I move on, I would like to establish some philosophical base for us all to fall back on if we have questions or if we start to doubt that TQM can be successful in our organizations. I'd like you to consider these quotes from three of our world's greatest thinkers.

The first of these is Machiavelli - known for his intrigue and administrative machinations.

> "There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in introducing a new order of things."

And the second is from a man known for his articulate use of the English language to describe our country's obsession with Baseball - Yogi Berra.

"The best way to get something done is to begin."

And lastly, I would like to quote a woman who has always been ahead of her time. Someone who has been able to turn the heads of leaders across our nation and around the world - Ms. Dolly Parton.

> "The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain."

Almost everything I will talk about today is predicated on the commitment of the leader to TQM principles. The failure of the leader to lead is one of the chief causes of failure of TQM programs.

Employees are too smart to believe that TQM is good enough for them but not good enough for the organization's leadership. There are four common elements in successful change scenarios.

1. A leader is prepared to lead the change.
2. People are prepared for the change
3. There is a definite strategy for the change of culture.
4. Leadership is visibly involved.

And please, do not assume when I speak of leaders that I am referring solely to senior management. Leaders can be found at all levels of the organization and can make a difference in the direction of that organization from any level. Because anyone, no matter where they work in your organization or what they do, can have a vision which excites and empowers other people to move forward. We experienced that at Rio Salado when we recently faced a problem. We knew that many of our part-time students, a large percentage, signed up for a class, finished and we never saw them again. So the associate deans along with the faculty and support staff leadership decided to tackle the problem of getting our customers back and keeping them with us. So we formed the Rio Salado Volunteer Fire department to extinguish this problem.

Through the bulletin and other means - meetings, word of mouth - they asked for volunteers to make phone calls in the evenings and on weekends. In a three week period just prior to the Spring semester, Rio volunteers placed thousands of phone calls to three types of students:

- Those who had been registered in the Spring of 1992 and had not returned to Rio last Fall.
- Those who had been registered in the Fall and had not yet registered for Spring semester.

- And those w[illegible]had registered for Spring but were about to be dropped for non-payment of tuition and fees.

We had an incredible time. Our Fire Department had a 13% success rate. In other words, out of every 7 students we contacted, one registered for classes with Rio again. Our volunteer employees put out a major fire that we were facing. And they loved it. In fact, everyone loved it.

Our employees were fearful at first. They said things like,

"What if the student yells at me."
"These people don't want to talk to us."
"Aren't we intruding on their time."

Well, let me tell you, the students and former students were flabbergasted to hear from us. They couldn't believe that we weren't asking for a donation, or we weren't trying to get them to pay an old bill. They said things like:

"I've never had a college call me before."
"Are you really calling to just see if I need anything?"
"You mean, you just want to see if everything's okay?"

They couldn't believe that we cared enough to call them up. We were elated by the response. But maybe we should have been saddened. After all, these are our customers, our clients who were surprised to hear from us.

Well, at Rio, our Fire Department is going to become a regular fixture at our college. If you sign up for a class at Rio Salado and you drop out, don't complete the class, or don't come back to us the next semester, you should expect a phone call to find out what's wrong and how we can help.

I now want to focus on Dr. Deming's first point, the importance of constancy of purpose.

At Rio Salado, we found that one of the most valuable ways to help our organization do all of these things and to be enthusiastic about it is to give every employee a believable and shared vision of the future.

A great vision produces power within an organization. A vision is about greatness. It is greater than ourselves and greater than the sum of all the parts of the organization.

A vision is about creating an organization which expresses our deepest values about work, achievement and community. Vision brings about change through the power

of its dream. Vision helps create an ideal in our minds - a grand and magnificent reason for existence.

A great vision has three qualities:

* It comes from the heart
* We, alone, can make this statement
* It is radical and compelling

But don't get confused here. A vision statement is NOT a mission statement. A mission statement comes from the head. A vision statement comes from the heart.

It is a corporate dream, a group fantasy if you will, a futuristic vision which makes everyone a little more proud to be part of the organization and gives everyone his or her personal reason to work harder.

But there are also pitfalls. Because, as Joel Barker said,

"Vision without action is merely a dream.
Action without vision just passes time.
Vision with action can change the world."

Great visions are not handed down or dictated. They are created through the involvement of employees throughout the organization. As Woodrow Wilson once said:

> "You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand."

There is a wonderful description of vision in the book The Fifth Discipline: The Art And Practice of the Learning Organization by Peter Senge of how a shared vision empowers employees and encourages team learning, risk taking and experimentation. He calls it living with the creative tension between vision and reality. He writes of Herman Miller, a large corporation and its environment:

> "When you are immersed in a vision," says Herman Miller's President Ed Simon, "You know what needs to be done. But you often don't know how to do it. You run an experiment because you think it is going to get you there. It doesn't work. New input. New data. You change direction and run another experiment. Everything is an experiment, but there is no ambiguity at all. It's perfectly clear why you're doing it. People aren't saying "Give me a guarantee that it will work." Everybody

knows that there is no guarantee. But the people are committed nonetheless."

A great vision should provide the opportunity for us to move forward, to try new things, to make a difference in other people's lives, and to take great satisfaction in doing so.

As Lyndon Johnson said in urging every American to dream and marvel

> "It is the excitement of becoming -- always becoming, trying, probing, falling, resting, and trying again -- but always trying and always gaining. We are a nation of believers and we believe in ourselves."

At Rio Salado Community College, we followed Johnson's admonitions in collectively brainstorming and developing our Vision statement, which reads:

> "IN THE YEAR 2000, RIO SALADO COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS THE COLLEGE OF CHOICE FOR ITS STUDENTS BECAUSE IT GUARANTEES ACADEMIC SUCCESS THROUGH TEACHING EXCELLENCE AND THE FOSTERING OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING SKILLS. OUR RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE COMMITMENT TO OUR MANY COMMUNITIES OF UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS IS EVIDENT THROUGH OUR COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES, OUR DEDICATION TO VISIONARY AND INNOVATIVE LEARNING DELIVERY AND DESIGN, AND OUR HIGH QUALITY, STUDENT-CENTERED INSTRUCTION. WE FOCUS ON TOTAL QUALITY AND FOSTER A CARING, SUPPORTIVE, HARMONIOUS ACADEMIC AND WORK ENVIRONMENT, BASED IN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND A RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY.

Wow! That's quite a vision. Obviously the college faculty and staff were setting a big agenda for ourselves, one that is definitely a reach. But it is a vision that is compelling--and it is a SHARED vision.

But don't be satisfied with just putting your vision statement in your publications. At Rio we held sessions with every department or unit where we presented the vision statement and then asked them to brainstorm a vision for their unit consistent with the larger vision. And this effort has paid off. In a December 1992 survey of employees, 94% of the full-time employees said they understood their roles in accomplishing our mission.

Through these efforts and numerous others instituted at Rio Salado, we have taken some of the first steps toward empowerment of our employees.

Let's focus for a minute on the difference between power and empowerment.

> Power is a measure of a person's potential to get others to do what he/she wants them to as well as avoid being forced by others to do what he/she does not want to do.
>
> Empowerment is giving people the authority and information they need to make wise business decisions and solve problems. Truly empowered people have the security to know they can take risks and make mistakes.

The employee depicted in this cartoon is not empowered:

> "Well, I can't say that Wilson here is very aggressive or creative, but he is in many ways the ideal employee."

As a President, I have learned that empowerment of employees doesn't weaken my power at all -- in fact it enhances it and that's the empowerment paradigm.

The Empowerment Paradigm states that "There is no shortage of power." "I can give power to others without losing power." It also says that I can actually gain power by giving power to others. And that empowered people need understandable goals and objectives--what we call boundaries.

This Dilbert cartoon illustrates is empowerment without boundaries:

> "From now on, all employees are empowered to make their own decisions."
> "Empowerment is the concept of the nineties. You'll be happier and more productive."
> "You're fired Dilbert." "No. You are!" "I'll never work hard again."

You may have heard about those studies of young children on their playgrounds. In the unfenced playground, the children stayed close to the middle because its safer huddled together. But in the playground with a fence around it, children immediately went to the edges of the playground and explored every inch within that fenced area.

Well, the role of Senior managers should be to set the boundaries - the fence, if you will - that define the work environment. And, by pushing the decisionmaking back down to the appropriate level, seniors managers will have the time to think about where that fence should be and whether it should be moved or redesigned.

It is the role of the Middle Managers to take the organization to those boundaries. To look for broken fence posts, to provide suggestions on whether the fence should be

moved, but also to make sure that the area within the fence is safe and secure and well-maintained.

And its the role of the next level, the professional staff and others, to change those things within their control which need to be changed. Every employee should be able to make those decisions which impact their day to day work. Everyone should have the authority to change those things for which they will be blamed.

This is consistent with the basic beliefs of Total Quality organizations.

* People want to do a good job.
* The person who does the job is the expert in that job.
* Increased participation produces increased contribution.
* Customer satisfaction is a mirror of employee satisfaction.

By the way, most organizations have systems in place that hamper the first three beliefs. And if you don't truly believe all four, everyone will know.

And now I want to move to another of Dr. Deming's points - driving fear out of the workplace.

There are employees impaired by fear in every organization. There are people with good ideas who don't express them because they are afraid. There are people who make mistakes that cause great damage because they were afraid to ask a question about something they didn't understand.

Oestreich and Ryan define fear as,

> "feeling threatened by possible repercussions due to speaking up about work-related concerns."

In an organization where fear is a major player, there are not truly such things as teamwork or innovation or creativity.

We should think of the word fear as an acronym, as suggested by Dr. Roy Amrein.

False
Evidence
Appearing
Real

We all know that the face of fear isn't pretty. This fear can express itself in those silences that plague most managers and most meetings. Silence represents the absence of ideas, the lack of enthusiasm, suggestions that never go beyond the

ordinary, conversations that circulate but never concentrate, unfinished business, and mediocre performance.

Fear can be racism, and sexism and other kinds of discrimination. Fear is expressed as put-downs and sarcasm and jokes.

We have to remember that we are never alone in our fears. Even John Wayne, in the movie, Sands of Iwo Jimo, when confronted with a young marine who was shaking in his foxhole on the beach, looked at him, offered him a cigarette, and said, "I'm afraid, too, kid". Well, I have MY fears, too. Just opening the discussion of fear with my employees caused me fear as I wondered whether I was emotionally prepared to deal with what they had to tell me.

But as a leader, I knew I had to overcome my fears because, as Dr. Deming has said,

> "The fundamental problem in American business is that people are scared to discuss the problems of people."

And this problem or fear creates something that Oestriech and Ryan call an Undiscussable.

> An undiscussable is a problem or issue that someone hesitates to talk about with those essential to its resolution.

Here's an example of a great undiscussable.

> These astronauts are observing that the earth is really a balloon. The one says, "Listen. I think we better keep this quiet."

Recently, at Rio Salado, we distributed an anonymous survey to all employees regarding their fears. This first step helped us open the communications doors so we could begin to talk about those undiscussables. The four fears that were cited most often were those fears related to individual employees not being able to do the best job possible. Fear of losing their jobs was listed last. The four highest ranked fears were:

> Work overload interfering with doing job well
> Dealing with interpersonal conflict in the workplace
> Lacking information/resources to do one's job well
> Having one's job performance adversely affected by others

And we shouldn't have been surprised with these results because Dr. Deming tells us that employees come to work wanting to do a good job. But it still surprised us.

And having said all this about empowering employees, giving them a voice in decision making, allowing them to be part of the vision, driving out fear, and sharing responsibility with everyone in your organization, we now have to do something about the way we reward and recognize employees.

I can remember first starting out in my career. There were people getting raises and promotions who didn't do the work. There were people making large salaries who couldn't do the work. I could never figure out how all this was decided upon.

Then I read where John Dewey described how they decided on who got what in the educational system in Texas. He said,

> "This business reminds me of the way they used to weigh hogs in Texas. First, they would get a long plank, put it over a crossbar (like a fulcrum), and somehow tie the hog onto one end of the plank. Then they'd search all around for a rock that exactly balanced the weight of the hog - and then they'd guess the weight of the rock."

Sadly enough, Dewey had it right in many instances.

If customer focus is going to be the obsession of our organizations, then we must reward employees for helping us to maintain that focus. We can't punish the employee who is late with monthly reports because he or she spent too much time helping customers work their way through the process and reward the employee whose reports are on time but who never returned 15 telephone calls from customers with questions.

If we recognize that people are most committed to their own ideas, than from ideas foisted on them from above, then we better be prepared to reward them for their ideas.

If we push decision making down to the appropriate level, then we better reward people for making good decisions.

And if we encourage every employee to be creative and dynamic, then we better reward them for creativity and dynamism.

At Rio Salado, we recently surveyed all of our employees, full and part-time, regarding rewards and recognitions. When asked what employees should receive recognition for, the top three responses were:

* Professional excellence
* Service to external customers
* Contributions to their department

And, when asked how they wanted to be recognized, they said:

- A letter from the President placed in their personnel file
- A Certificate of Recognition

They were offered banquets, flowers, plaques, mugs, seminars, books, magazines, and so forth. But they chose non-material things as their most desired reward.

When employees feel they have had a part in determining the vision that they are working toward, and when they feel they have the ability to voice their concerns without fear of reprisal, and when they know that they will be recognized, even in a small way, for the extra efforts they make on behalf of the organization, then, and only then, will you truly be able to develop the teamwork that allows Quality management to work effectively. And just so we are clear about this - fear in the workplace is not confined to new employees or employees in the lower paying jobs. Fear extends all the way to the top and often gets worse the more money you are paid.

I've just spent a lot of time describing how to change your organization in any number of ways. But no matter how hard you try, sometimes human beings just seem to resist change and you find yourself haunted by ghosts in the system - gremlins that create minor havoc. A new program starts, but for some strange reason, events previously agreed to, don't occur. Printed materials disappear or never appear. Strange things happen. Rooms aren't properly scheduled. Mailings go awry. There are ghosts in the system. Sometimes these ghosts are the result of "fear of change". Certain employees don't seem to be able to verbalize their fear - maybe they can't even identify it themselves. But their fear of change causes them to do or not do things that invariably undermine the new processes - in other words, they sabotage the change.

So, at Rio Salado Community College, we developed the Rio Salado Protoplasm Accelerator Ghostbuster Kit.

When we see a ghost raise its nasty head, we want to be able to knock it out as soon as possible. So we "arm" our employees with special ghostbusting weapons and techniques. As you can see from the Protoplasm Accelerators being passed out among you - some of you may call them water guns, but that's because you don't have our ghostbuster kit and don't know how to use these weapons properly yet - as you can see, when we "arm" our employees, we mean business.

This is just one of the weapons that our employees have to drive away the ghosts of the past and the goblins of the future. There are ten other weapons and tools which our employees maintain with them at all times.

1. Our Employee Training Program is our most important weapon. A decade ago, this program would have been seen as a Nuclear Deterrent approach. We also like to refer to our training program as our Star Wars Initiative. We intend to shoot down incoming missiles before they strike and cause any significant damage. Our employees are trained to watch for those missiles and to take aim whenever they see them.

2. The second weapon is one that employees keep with them wherever they go - its our Employee Empowerment Training Manual and Reference Guide. We don't expect people to be perfect. Sometimes they forget when and how you use various tools. So every employee that is trained at Rio gets a comprehensive manual with an easy to find index and individual chapter summaries for quick reference.

3. Our third weapon is the President's Bulletin. Every Monday morning, each employee sees me, the College President, trying to communicate with each of them through electronic mail and hard copies. They know what's going on around our college before they start their work week.

4. And that leads right into our next weapon - the Rio Salado Rumor Control. As in any organization, rumors seem to arise out of the walls - like ghosts - and nothing that you put in their way even slows them down - except one thing, and this is the weapon we use. We tell our employees the truth. Rumors about reorganization, about my status, about budget cuts, about no salary increases, about longer hours, etc. etc. are all addressed the same way. I tell them the truth as I know it. I address rumors almost weekly in the President's bulletin so no one has to ask anybody else about what I said - they can read it for themselves every Monday.

5. And that ties into another weapon we have at Rio - the President's Breakfast. Once a month, a small group of employees from across all levels of the college are randomly selected to have breakfast with me. We talk openly, no notes are taken, people just feel free to express themselves. We have some great discussions and, because we have people from differing parts of the college, the impact of these breakfasts has been extremely positive on our efforts to break down barriers between departments.

6. But because ghosts and evil spirits can pop up at any time, and because even after you get rid of all of the ghosts you know about, there will be new ones that slither through the walls, we have our ultimate weapon - the world's most powerful army of ghostbusters stationed at every level of the college. We have trained TQM coaches in every nook and cranny of the college. No office is "coach-free". Whenever there is a new ghost, there's a trained Rio employee

to shoot it down. And if one coach can't do it him or herself, then we dispatch other trained coaches to gang up on the ghost.

7. You see, at Rio, we don't have any hidden corners. All our doors are open almost all the time. Most of our staff do not have walled offices, so privacy is somewhat limited, but that also means that secrecy is also limited. We try to do things out in the open and we use that openness as our seventh weapon against the ghosts.

8. And because of the things I just spoke about - openness, rumor control, training and the Bulletin, we don't have any Ghost Containment Units. We don't allow the ghosts, or the rumors, to hang around very long before we attack them head on. Where the ghosts of old ways of doing things exist, we believe in the direct approach. Mass all the weapons you can and blast that old ghost out of there before it can build itself a permanent home.

9. For that approach to work, we have to sometimes use one of our weapons of mass destruction - Open and direct access to me - the President. Any employee can send an electronic mail message to me at any time. I read them all, no one screens them for me. I respond to them directly and quickly. I respond to complaints, I respond to pleasant greetings. But I respond. Not only is my door almost always open, but my computer is always available for electronic mail messages.

10. And that brings me to the tenth weapon in our Ghostbuster's Arsenal--our evolving Rewards and Recognition Program. Our employees are participating in constructing the program so that it will help in recognizing the best Ghostbusting teams in our College.

But, before I move on, there is one secret ingredient which I depend heavily on to keep from getting slimed. Now it took me years to perfect this ingredient. I was amazed at how absent this ingredient was from most of the high level college discussions and decisions I was party to over the years. I am still surprised by how little this secret ingredient is used by executives.

This ingredient can produce mass hysteria, or it can weaken evil intent. It can overcome hostility, and it can soften the most austere exterior. It can be used by anyone and it doesn't cost a dime. And, if you use it correctly, it will help create the team spirit that is so necessary to implement appropriate changes within an organization. And, of course, that ingredient is laughter.

I laugh a lot. And I'm told that I have a distinctive laugh. Some people may actually mean a loud laugh, or a piercing laugh, or even an annoying laugh, but I am content to accept the term distinctive laugh.

We have found laughter to be addictive, and contagious, and also most enjoyable. When people are laughing, we consider that a part of the normal workday and we think it makes Rio Salado a better place to work.

In summary, think of employee empowerment as a stool with four legs as suggested by Phil Alexander--without any one of the legs, the stool would fall over.

We can have truly empowered employees only if we provide for them:

- Knowledge and skill
- Authority and responsibility
- Adequate and timely information, and
- A feeling of confidence and self-esteem.

For years, we laughed at the Japanese doing exercises together before work. We made movies about the hilarious way that they treated employees at all levels with respect and courtesy. We're not laughing now. We understand the role of leadership and employee teams in revamping the American mythology of management.

If I tried to leave you with one specific thing to remember about the human side of Quality, I guess it would be that you can never neglect that component of a Quality effort without fatal consequences. No matter what else comes and goes, concern and interest in the human side of quality never ends. We are on a journey characterized well by Winston Churchill after the great City of London had survived months of devastating destruction. He said,

> "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

To change the way America works and educates it's people will take a long time. I don't know where the end is or even if it can be predicted. But I do know that we have begun and that our employees and our students are benefiting from that beginning.

Thank you.

The Anatomy of Innovation

(Source: Unknown)